

**Reconsidering the
gender and scopic limits
of traditional art forms:**

**Reclaiming the space of
a woman's identity**

(Jo-Anne Patricia)

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Masters of Fine Arts, 1998**

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ABSTRACT

The content and form of contemporary concepts of identity in Australia originate in Australia's colonial history in which European structure of thinking and imaging were imposed on the colony. These structures were masculine and scopic in form and hence inhibited identities and practices, which did not conform to these structures.

The project primarily interrogates and deconstructs the masculine and scopic structures, which give legitimacy to both colonial practice and to painting and photographic media as the dominant visual representation of this practice. It is the theme of this project that the deconstruction is primarily a matter of considering issues of spatiality associated with scopic regimes. My intent has been to imagine and make a new type of space, which does not centre the subject in dominant masculine and scopic terms.

The development of such a new type of space aims to create a new stage on which other roles of identity can be imagined. More importantly it provides the artists with the opportunity to re-address the scopic as the dominant vehicle of meaning, and hence liberate the body as a more holistic and multiple sphere of identity (rather than one limited by the one sense of visualisation). A key tactic has been to incorporate media that are extra visual, in particular the use of textiles within an installation format.

The textile component of this project explores notions of traditional textile art practice. The organic nature and lucidity of the cloth provided a surface on which the stitch acts as a form of mark making, etching the surface of the fabric with a deconstructed symbol of identity. Through lighting an appeal to the other senses and experiences such as touch and movement is made. The originality of this installation is to make an artwork, which is grounded, on a new relationship between the viewer's body and with this relationship stage new approaches to identity.



Untitled

1998

Detail

Silk, Natural Dye,
Synthetic thread &
Hand Stitched.

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INTRODUCTION

I began the MFA (Research) in February 1996 confident after completing my BFA with Honours the previous year, that my research, although at times may have been difficult, would be quite straight forward. Reflecting on the past two years I could not have been further from the truth.

The difficulty began in March 1996 when, acting as the dutiful daughter that I am, I attended a family reunion. Leading up to the inevitable day, with a sense of knowing, I began to rehearse my answers to the unavoidable questions and comments from great Aunties and Uncles as they patted me on the hand. “Last time I saw you, you were only this high, my haven’t you grown and what are you doing with yourself dear, Hmm? school, at your age! textiles, so you make clothes do you?”

However, what hadn’t become apparent was that at least 150 people were expected to attend the family reunion and it would take place in a rather large marquee. Surveying this large cloth tent I realised the only means of escape was through the entrance, which was covered by a fabric flap door. Trying to hide my apprehension, I entered the space. Whilst looking for a familiar face, I noticed the makeshift bar in the bottom left hand corner of the room and made a B-line for it. Comforted by the glass of beer in my hand, I now stood back and perused the space and the people in it.

Through their noisy laughter and conversations, I found my own quiet space in which I realised that my relatives had laid claim to this place for a short period of time. In the morning it would revert back to a cow paddock and the fabric structure which housed them also held for the moment the secret whispering of family histories and genealogies.

For days afterwards I wondered what my relatives had made of the whole experience and whether they were oblivious to their own origins and history. On a more personal level it quietened so many of the questions about my own genealogy that I had been asking myself for years. However, after numerous conversations with the ‘authorities’ I was denied any public claim to parts of my genealogy. Family oral histories were refused authentication in the public arena — what might be called a written presence. And this became the principal concern of my research — how to give presence to that which is not written? Can an identity be grounded in stories that are only whispered in the night?

During the course I struggled with both ideas of identity, especially as they have been theorised in respect to Australian women’s identities, and the formal and expressive ways of realising my thesis in a textiles format.

The exegesis relates these struggles in two parts.

1. An account of the formal and expressive issues dealt with in the thesis — that to me is where the real research and work occurred.
2. An overview of the ideas relating to identity, Australia and womanhood that I was reading and writing about during this time, and which, no matter how obscurely, inform the content and formal concerns of my thesis.

PART ONE: An account of the formal and expressive issues dealt with in the thesis — which to me is where the real research and work occurred

Textiles: A Personal Narrative

A common pattern amongst textiles artists often emerges when one reads about their history and their association with textiles. For most, the practice of making traditional textiles has been a living history in their own families, their mothers and their grandmothers alike have made textiles. ‘...Textile crafts were a part of both their necessary domestic tasks and their recreational pastimes.’¹

This is not a story that I could tell truthfully. In fact for a long time I loathed the thought of creating anything out of fabric. Terms such as sewing machine, pins, needles and fabric, I would have likened to a dose of Epsom salts. The roots of my passionate hatred of sewing may be located in the compulsory home economic class at High School. The teacher, Miss Doe, patronised me in front of the entire class over my visible, invisible stitching on the gingham dress of the toilet roll doll cover.

I cringed at the thought of having to undertake textiles to gain my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. However, my perception of textiles could not have been further from the reality. My interest was aroused with the realisation that I did not have to find the pattern for the gingham dressed toilet roll doll cover and that the title Textiles was simply a generic term utilised by textile artists to describe practices which used an assortment of materials such as sticks, string, paper, plastics and wire to make 3D objects.

The turning point for me becoming a textile artist was the realisation that the sewing machine and a threaded needle were not just equipment for joining two pieces of fabric together, but also drawing tools. Stitching no longer had to be short, precise and invisible, it could be loud, long, soft or hard and liberating. My fascination in such processes has resulted in my work being described as ‘well crafted’. However, what intrigues me about textiles is not so much its tradition as a craft but its history of and potential for social narrative.

‘Time and again, revolutions have been sewn into textiles: from suffragette embroideries to trade union banners, to the children’s samplers that told of their hatred of sewing, to AIDS quilt, and Hmong embroidered narratives that tell the harrowing tale of escaping death in Indo-China.’² I had grown up with a family of storytellers who both loved to listen to and tell a good yarn. I realised that textiles provided the opportunity to research this tradition as well as participate in it as a textile artist.

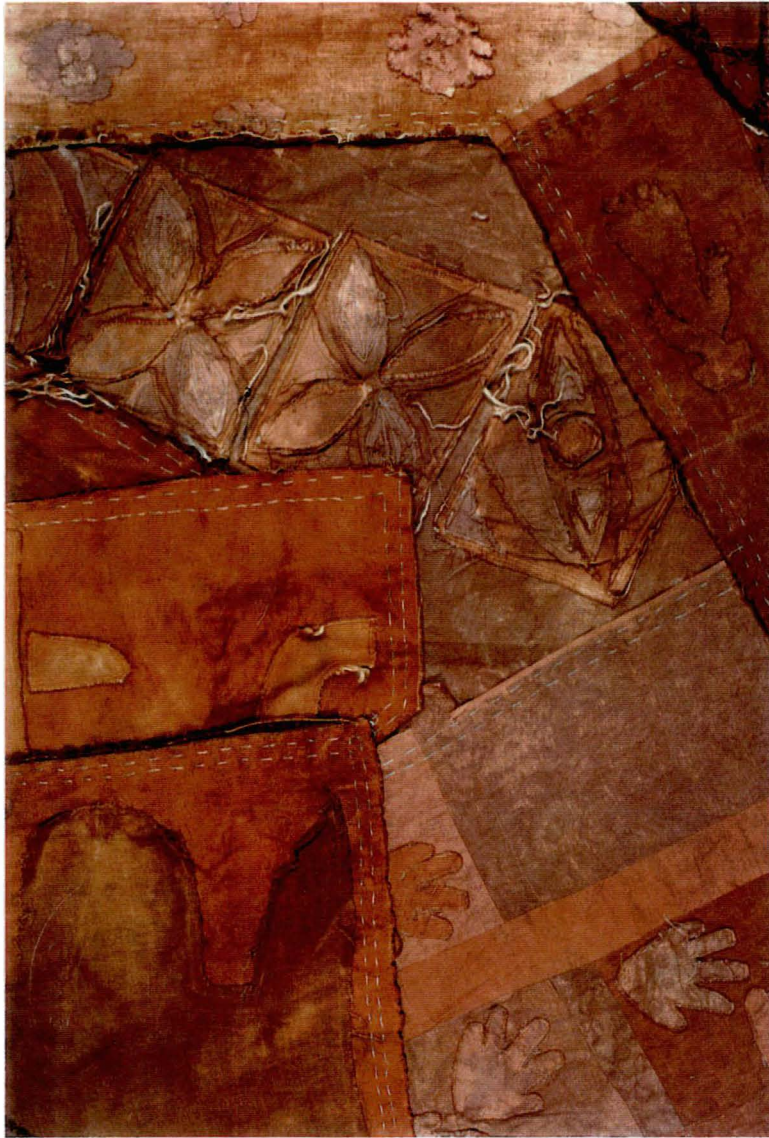
The Honours Folio

The research topic, which I had chosen for the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours), proved to be extremely challenging and useful for my Masters project. The Honours work had focused on the relationship between issues of Multiculturalism and their expression in textile art. One result of my research was my investigation of the extent to which former ‘ethnic’ art practices, which were once entirely in a private domain, had entered the public sphere. As the research developed I made two assumptions, first Government policies aimed at Australia’s Multicultural society were often inappropriate rhetoric.

Second, rather than promoting the positive outcomes of cultural diversity in Australian society, the varying Government strategies following Whitlam's initial policy have caused separatism, stereotypical identities, marginalisation and a hidden generation. The most satisfying element of this research topic was the opportunity to study the numerous varieties of culturally diverse textile traditions in Australia.

Over the past two years I have continually returned to my Honours folio. I see it as a benchmark, an intersection, and a change in my thinking, work, which hinted at elements if considered further, would impart greater strength and significance. I constructed three major pieces titled *Just Below the Surface 1, 2 and 3* for the Honours folio. These pieces were 2.5m h x 2m w, hand and machine stitched, synthetic thread, Naphthol dyed, cotton and silk.

It was during the Honours year that I began to question the way in which textiles was being hung in galleries and the ramifications of hanging work on the walls. The moment that we enter a traditional gallery space it is as if our non-visual senses have been deleted. In my opinion textiles hung on gallery walls instantly create a barrier between the viewer and the work. Thus *Just Below the Surface 1, 2 and 3* were hung in a U-formation in space, which allowed the viewer to walk in to see the front and around to see the back. Two smaller heavily stitched natural dyed pieces, which completed the folio, were hung double over at waist height, in an attempt to dare the viewer to use senses other than sight.



Just Below The Surface

1995

Detail

Silk, Cotton, Naphthol Dye

Synthetic Thread,

Hand & Machine Stitched.

Although the panels *Just Below the Surface 1, 2 and 3* were obviously cloth and varying textures in the finished pieces were tantalising, the domineering size of the panels did little to promote or encourage the viewer to experience the work through the sense of touch. Touch is an element, which I consider to be of foremost importance when articulating our experience and relationship to textiles. Due to the size of the work I had created the very situation I was attempting to avoid. In order to observe the work the viewer had to step back from it. Furthermore, I had accentuated that ‘Seeing has become surveillance — the act of domination through the gaze’,³ an area that I needed to re-address in following work.

Strangely I feel quite uncomfortable when I look at the *Just Below the Surface 1, 2 and 3* and I have often wondered why? I know I carried a sense of living outside of this work while I was making it, I did not feel a sense of connection between the panels as I did to the smaller pieces titled *Isness* and *Avenue (Knowing)*. I believe my apparent uneasiness is partly to do with the fact that ‘Crafts people look to cultures that value the areas of cultural production that are marginalised in our culture. They seek to learn not only the use of materials and techniques, but also the values, beliefs and aesthetics that underpin crafts practices in non-western cultures. Nevertheless, they construct, and relate to an idea of those cultures, which arises out of necessarily limited experiences of alternative cultures. Though it is frequently romanticised and positively valued, this representation of other cultures remains the product of western culture’.⁴ In the *Just Below the Surface 1, 2 and 3* I had located myself and the viewer in the position of voyeur, not participant. The determination to resolve this is the principal motive of my Masters research.



Avenue (knowing)
1995
Detail
Silk, Natural Dye,
Synthetic thread &
Hand Stitched.

Masters Research

1. Process of Research

I have found the process of research for the Masters thesis to be quite different from the undergraduate degree. The most obvious difference is the time span with which you have to research the thesis. I have found that the notion of time is always lingering in the back of your mind.

I knew that when I began the Masters (Research) I had a time limit of two years to conduct my research and complete both the written and practical components of the thesis. Fresh from the Honours program, two years appeared to be an exorbitant amount of time to accomplish the tasks. However, what I discovered was the research for the Masters degree dictated an entirely different approach to the process of researching, from the perspective of both the Honours year and making work for an exhibition with a curatorial theme. The Masters thesis is not about producing lots of different things, rather, about running with an idea, pushing at as far as possible into a single thesis, which, in this case, is the installation.

I would liken the process of research to plotting the route for a journey. You begin your journey at point A and you know that you have a required amount of time to arrive at point B. If you have a short amount of time to arrive at your destination generally you would take a well signposted direct route. The 'direct route' would be a fair analogy of the way in which I and arguably, other students conducted research in the undergraduate degree.

During the research for the Masters thesis I continually veered off the direct route. At times this was exciting because you were exploring and mapping unknown territory which was bringing you closer to your destination and at intervals it was infuriating because you felt that you were either regressing or stationary. The most interesting and refreshing happening I have discovered about the process of research for the MFA is that once you have reached your destination, you feel as if your journey has just begun.

2. Influences

Throughout the undergraduate degree it was installed in students the importance of looking at the work of fellow students, art practitioners and contemporary and art historical movements. At first I found this practice a daunting task which I did my utmost to avoid. On reflection, my defiance grew from lack of confidence and knowledge necessary to critique other artists work. Furthermore, the ability to ascertain and translate qualities which I found potent in others work to my own work.

However, I believe and continue substantiate that my strongest work has come to fruition due simply to a gut reaction, a sense of knowing. Moreover, at the chance of contradicting myself I also appreciate and acknowledge the fact that the 'sense of knowing' has developed through sheer hard work, numerous mistakes and a great deal of questioning.

When looking at the works of artists, writers or performers, I quite often found myself far more interested in the catalyst for the artwork rather than the art its self. To narrow down the greatest influences on my Masters work is a difficult task, the research which I have undertaken for the past several years has been quite broad. I believe, however, that my own response to the work of Elsje King and Judy Watson has been particularly pertinent to the outcomes in this folio of work. I found qualities in works by these artists particularly moving and I was interested in developing similar qualities in my own work.

Both King and Watson are practicing Australian artists with disparate heritages. Watson is an Australian Aboriginal woman and King is a postwar Dutch migrant. There are several reasons why I was primarily drawn to these two artists, most importantly was the fact that they both deal with issues of identity and the Australian landscape. My initial expectation was that they would deal with these themes quite differently due to their heritages and lineages. But surprisingly there are some overwhelming similarities in both their conceptual and aesthetic concerns.

When I began researching both artists I reasoned that they felt displaced from their traditional homelands, this notion conflicts with an overwhelming sense of Australianness about their work. Both Watson and King's work amplifies an attachment and acknowledgment of Australia's unique landscape. There is no doubt that both artists draw directly from the Australian landscape and locate themselves within it. I was particularly interested in their portrayal of Australian landscape, which has long been recognised as an icon of the Australian identity.

Arguably, the process of layering by both artists superimposes a multitude of messages on the surface of their work. The transparencies and tactility of layering suggests notions of their own belief in the fragility of the landscape, the human body and spirit. Submerged in these layers are offerings of information about their own identities. Watson a painter, tantalises the viewer with a sheath of pigment, paint, pastels, ochre and subtle mark making leaving the viewer in no doubt of her Aboriginality. Frequently, King uses layers of natural dyed, weathered cloth and stitch and a refined geometric symbolism, arguably, referencing a link to European art history.

One of the traits which I found particularly influential in both these artists work was the absence of a literal picture of the Australian landscape, it is captured in feeling. What on the surface often appears to be simplistic representation, lures the unsuspecting viewer closer, at the point of engagement, your skin begins to prickle with the realisation of the power and presence, the work resonates an Australianness.

Like most MFA candidates I have spent numerous hours reading. Although the roots of the ideas for the Masters folio lie in my own personal experience, I have sought out and listened to ordinary Australian peoples stories of struggle in defining their own identities and their search for a space for that identity to form in. I realised very early in the research that one way I could give my work a greater strength and capture the attention of a wider audience was simply by understanding and developing strategies which would enable me to capture the very core of others' plights and experiences. In retrospect I was attempting to place myself in a more objective position.

Some may argue that a twenty-seven-year-old woman living in Tasmania does not process enough life experiences to complete a Master of Fine Arts (Research). To possess the capability and the time to both self indulge and submerge myself totally in my own research and a community of like minded people for six uninterrupted years is an indulgence which I do not take for granted. I believe that this experience has quite possibly been one of the greatest influences on my work and my thinking to date.

Now that I have reached the final stages of two years intense study and research I feel confident enough to call myself an artist. Moreover, I perceive my final Masters work expresses a level of maturity and exploration that I previously have not arrived at and I have accomplished a folio of work worthy of exhibition.

Textile Processes and Techniques

One of my central aims during the undergraduate degree was to acquire and accumulate as many textile processes and techniques as possible. Once I had completed the degree I was satisfied that I was now armed with an adequate understanding of a range of traditional and contemporary textile practices and methods. I felt confident from the onset of the Masters degree, I could make both articulate and educated decisions about the textile processes and techniques I have chosen to use in this folio.

Over the past three years I have developed a particular style of working. The commencement of making is proceeded by two very important steps, brainstorming ideas and drawing. I have discovered that this method of working saves time by unearthing formidable problems in the early stages, prevention is better than cure.

I generally begin making the work by deciding on the height width and dimensions of each piece. There were several major factors, which contributed to the decisions about the size of the works for this folio. These factors included; size in relationship to the human body, the measurements of the constructed room and its ability to house the work.

The work that I make is pieced and hand stitched, a tradition, which has long been associated with the making of textiles. This is a labour intensive exercise, which enables two things to eventuate. First, although I am working from a drawing, I have generally found that once I begin to stitch the work has a habit of chatting to me, guiding me in a different direction, disastrous experiences have taught me not to argue. Secondly, I have found that while I am stitching ideas for the next piece begin to form. In the past I have found that my work has developed in a particular sequence and generally I did not start the next piece until I had finished the first piece. This is not true of the Masters folio at times I was working on several at once.

I have little appreciation for synthetic fibres or dyes. I dislike the feel and the sounds that these fibres produce, and I am well aware of the impact that the use of synthetic dyes has on our natural environment as well as my own body. All of my work is made from natural fibres, cotton, wool and silk. My interest and enthusiasm for natural fibres has been accentuated over the past several years through practical exploration and research. I have been known to leave fabric in the environment, bury it, lay vegetable matter on it, allow the natural formation of fungi and bacteria to create its own patterns, allowing the elements to rot it. The surface of the fabric has a skin like quality and these procedures cause a similar wearing and weathering, a metaphor for the human body.

I have spent a great deal of time researching the traditional and contemporary use of natural dyes. These dyes present a lower risk of contamination to our environment and I perceive them to be more user friendly, than their synthetic counterparts. However, as technology progressed it became more acceptable to use processed mordants (man-mined minerals) rather than the traditional mordants, human or animal urine. As I am not excited about the prospect of having to use urine, yet I am concerned about man's impact on our environment and landscape, I began to research and use recycled items such as aluminium cans and rusted metal objects as mordants.

The work that I make begins and remains in shades of white and cream until I feel that the stitching and piecing is complete. There is no direct reference for the viewer, but the fibres that these works were dyed with were collected from landscapes and environments which are of particular importance to both own and my families identity. The broader consideration was the fact that naturally dyed fabric retains the smell of the bush, in a confined space these smells would be enhanced and no doubt play a major role in reinforcing and suggesting a unique Australian flavour.

The process of hand stitching is an integral part of the work. Unlike the stitch created by sewing machine, hand stitching not only emphasises a textile tradition, it becomes a process of identification, a signature, a mark of the artists presence. Hand stitching inevitably draws the viewer closer, denying the traditional impending gap that exists between viewer and work, it creates an intimate space, a union, a new way of seeing.

The creation of spaces within spaces was an important aspect to the over all theoretical concerns and aims of this thesis. Much of textiles power owes itself to its craft based origins. Traditional textiles have a back and a front, an inside and an outside. By drawing on and employing this textile tradition I could subtly define internal and external spaces in the final installation. Therefore, a major concern throughout the making process was to emphasis the backs as backs without appearing contrived.

The Project

The initial aim of the original project was to examine how the Australian Government's 'Multicultural' policy advocated tolerance and acceptance of the diversity of cultures which exist in Australia, and how traditional sub-cultures which were formerly repressed by persuasive Anglo-Celtic culture are now seen to be essential in providing vital national identity for multicultural society. To what extent, I wondered, could this development be seen to parallel the former repression and the current role of women who are active in contemporary Australian society?

The family reunion was the catalyst for the shift from the multicultural aspect to the more fundamental issues of identity and symbolic form, in particular, in terms of an Australian woman from NorthWest Tasmania. With the shift, four formal issues of concern developed which became the main issues to be dealt with in realising the thesis.

1. Finding a Symbol to Represent Woman

I was faced with the immediate task of finding a symbol for woman, the subject of the social narrative I am attempting to tell. Finding a symbol to represent woman was a perplexing task. I began by using the inverted triangle, which represents '...the feminine principle, the matrix...the great mother a genetrix...In mountain and cave symbolism the mountain is the masculine, upward-pointing triangle and the cave the feminine, downward pointing symbol'.⁵ The nagging doubts I had about this symbol were quickly confirmed.

While I wanted to retain references to the female body and experience — thus the use of the triangle symbol — I did not want the symbol to be reduced to just a vagina symbol. Nor was I interested in whatever shock value may still reside in images of the vagina. My aim is not to shock, but quite the opposite — to make present hidden stories. To me the triangle became too obvious. It has been so widely used in feminist art of the last twenty years, that it has become a cliché. With further investigation I also concluded that the triangle was a too ambiguous symbol, with numerous meanings. Thus, I worried that the narrative aspect of this work would be hidden, in the geometry of the work, and that a play of triangle would become merely decorative or formal.

However, the one thing that did appeal to me about the use of the triangle was the ease with which it could be repeated. The notion of repetition was important to this work for two reasons. First traditionally women's work in the domestic arena is repetitive and second repetition is closely associated with textile techniques, stitching, printing and narrative.

From the triangle I began to look at images of prehistoric women. I was attracted to the anonymity and simplicity of the drawings and carvings. However, as I played with numerous images of prehistoric woman they appeared to be always sitting on the surface rather than becoming an integral part of the work as the triangle had. This image I felt encouraged the viewer to use the eye rather than other senses. It also alluded to qualities found in painting rather than emphasising the practise of textile process.

It was on a trip to Sydney that I discovered the image that I was looking for on a palm stem. What appealed to me about this image was the fact that it may be read as a pod, a form which creates life, a symbol of woman (with obvious vagina references), and inverted became an image of the eye which looks back at the viewer, drawing them into the work and not allowing them to be voyeur. It possessed the qualities that I was looking for in a symbol to express the social narrative I am attempting to tell.

2. Landscape, Body, Texture, and Colour

I was aware that the image, which I had chosen to symbolise Australian woman, might be perceived as a universal image of woman. As I am dealing with issues concerning Australian female identities and histories, I felt that it was necessary to express an Australian perspective. This I partially reference by dyeing the work from natural fibres collected from landscapes which are important to my own identity, therefore, locating and positioning myself in the broader research. As well as being a woman, I am a woman from a rural community in which landscape is an important element. Furthermore, landscape is historically essential to notions of being Australian.

As a female textile artist I believe the links between the landscape and the body are particularly pertinent. These links are emphasised further when one is dealing with issues of identity. Both the landscape and the body may be recognised as sites of identity. The relationship between the Australian female identity and the landscape is examined further through the narrative and which is told through abstraction, layering and stitch on the cloth's surface. These notions of landscape and identity in the Australian context are explored in more detail in the second part of the exegesis.

3. Lighting

Generally, when work is hung in a gallery space the main function of lighting is to enhance the art. However, I was aware even in the primary stages of developing ideas for the final installation that lighting had a greater role to play. It would be the final touch that either pulled the entire installation together or butchered it.

When you make work which has developed from a very personal experience, a memory or a response to a happening or event in your life it is very easy to become submerged in your own pathos. Unless you are capable of detaching yourself throughout the making process your work can become quite literal. This type of work allows little or no room for the viewer to interrupt or respond to the issues you have dealt with. Personally I find art which does not consider or allow the viewer to contemplate or uncover a connection to it boring, cold and I usually leave with overwhelming sense of estrangement. I sensed that lighting would be a key component that helped to create a union between the viewer and the installation. The role of lighting proved to provide both practical and conceptual challenges throughout the Masters degree.

Practical Concerns

Previously I had visited exhibitions where lighting had been applied to both complement the art and successfully devise another dimension in the work, through shadows. Shadowing refined and enhanced the structural elements of individual pieces. Furthermore, creating a dialogue about the making process, which is particularly pertinent to artists, whose work has evolved from traditional craft based practices.

In retrospect I had inadvertently begun to play with these ideas in the honours folio. Quite by accident the placement and combination of light and dense fabric piecing in the three works titled Just Below The Surface 1, 2 and 3 coupled with lighting had enhanced some interesting structural properties. Although, I considered the utilisation quite crude if the use of lighting was explored further I had the opportunity to emphasis not only the materiality of the work, but also develop and question notions of the scopic.

If I was to successfully develop these ideas I needed to explore the actual use of lights in this work. I discovered earlier that the most efficient way of making major decisions about this work was to brainstorm ideas. This particular brainstorming explored the use of; coloured globes, dim light, staggered lights, diagrams for possible positions for lights, the types of lights, the cost of lighting, buying, renting, light voltages, technical information, which work need to lit, could the roof of the installation with stand the weight of lights, the amount of heat the lights would produce (I did not want the fabric room to catch on fire), how intrusive light fittings would be and so on.

Conceptual Concerns

I was interested in the way that lighting would define and reinforce some of the conceptual concerns that I had dealt with in this folio of work. Primarily I was interested in creating spaces. This is achieved simply through both the presences and absence of lighting.

With the introduction of a three-dimensional pod piece and the use of lighting the floor will become an integral part of the overall installation. The six two-dimensional pieces will be hung in a loose pod formation. These pieces will be lit from either above or the side creating a subtle pod shadow on the floor. Through this shadowing I am attempting to frame and render an intimate space for a newly constructed identity to exist.

Through the use of lighting I want to make the viewer an active participant in the overall experience. Via the placement of lights and the construction of a confined space through hanging and the floor pieces, the viewer shadow is reflected on the work, my intention is to create a subliminal response and acknowledgment of their own relationship to the work.

At the entrance to the room the viewer is faced with a hanging work, at varying intervals in this piece the viewers sight is obscured. The columniation of weights of fabric and lighting provide the ingredients to suggest and play with ingrained notions of the scopic. Most importantly, I hope to ignite a series of questioning in the viewer, propose a new way looking.

Installation

From the Saturday night of the Family Reunion the nature of my thesis began to form in my head: it would be an installation mainly derived from the sense of the tent in the cow paddock. Since that time two years ago the symbol for woman has changed, the research has developed and at points the idea behind the installation has shifted, but only to return to the original image.

The ideas for the installation developed from the cloth tent, which housed my family the night of the family reunion. That Saturday, there was a nip in the air that heightened all the smells and sounds, the night was dark yet clear, the moon illuminated the white cloth structure placed in the top left hand corner of a cattle paddock, close to my family home. As you can imagine, to hold one hundred and fifty people, this was a huge structure. Part of the fence to the cow paddock was dismantled. Once you had entered only a cloth flap door obscured the cow paddock access to the tent. In the middle of the tent was a round bail with people leaning on it, chairs filled with relatives were dispersed around the perimeter of the tent, they appeared to be oblivious to the world outside the structure. In the bottom left hand corner there was makeshift bar. There was lots of laughter and chattering, accompanied by the droning sound of some unknown country and western singer from the CD player. On entering the tent there was no escaping the odd aroma, a combination of cigarette, perfume beer and sweet smell of hay.

I distinctly remember being inspired by two things that night. First I was struck by the power of cloth to retain and house so many people. Second, although it was a noisy and busy space there was a peaceful quietness about it which gave the space a symbolic presence. The ability of the cloth structure too not only house the people within the space, but to symbolise a type of church or collective identity. I was reminded of the Piero Della Francesca painting titled *Polyptych of the Misericordia* in which the Virgin Mary becomes a symbol of the church. Furthermore, Piero clearly feminises the church through direct references to emblems of the vagina and womb.

Because I was dealing with issues of female identity, I was aware of creating a space that is too clichéd and reductive in meaning. In particular, I worried that the space I was creating could too easily be reduced to a symbol of vagina/womb — hence I was determined, above all else, of suggesting that the entrance to the space evoked either vaginal lips or passage, and that once inside, the space would not seem to be womb-like. I wanted to retain such references to the female body, but in oblique rather than direct ways. With these thoughts in mind, I explored four major possibilities before deciding on the final installation as follows.

1. Was to open the door to the existing room, leaving the viewer with no choice other than to enter the room that I had built. A further development of this idea was, as the viewer opened the door they would be presented with one of the works which they would then have to push aside to enter the space (see **diagram 1a**).

I enjoyed the notion of having to touch the work to enter the space, but was a little resistant about forcing this motion on the viewer. A practical concern to be considered was the way the work would fall back into its place. Pushing this idea further I began to think of ways to make a piece of work which was split up the centre, allowing the viewer to brush through it (**see diagram 1b**).

2. Next I envisaged a circular structure within the existing square room. The notion behind this idea was that the existing square room would act as the masculine symbol and the circle would represent the feminine space (**see diagram 2a**). I abandoned this idea because I did not believe that the existing square room opposing the constructed circular room was particularly clear.
3. The next version was to create a square room within a square room (**see diagram 3a**) and directing the audience to move around the passageway to discover the entrance to the space. I felt that this idea was clumsy and it could possibly cause confusion. Developing this idea further I investigated the possibility of using a tunnel into the work. I abandoned this idea as this would definitely set up the notion of entry to the womb.
4. I also played with the idea of creating a space with lighting. I felt that this idea was too theatrical for the issues, concerns and social narrative that I am dealing with.

The final format for the installation has become a collage of ideas picked from the four major models. The final installation consists of a constructed room within a room. The viewer will enter the original room through its door. Once inside the existing room the viewer is faced with the choice of entering the constructed room or wandering around the outside. To enter the constructed space the viewer will have to brush past a piece of the work. The notion of temporality, which originates from the tent in the cow paddock, as metaphor for identity, textiles and woman are considered through the construct of the second room.

↓ *Original Room.

WHAT
COLOUR
Should
this
Room
be.
WHITE:
light
etc.?

what happens
with this space is
it important?

what is
happening
with this
space.

hanging
work in circular
shape problem
* consider the
image of
women.

cloth construction
Representing tent?

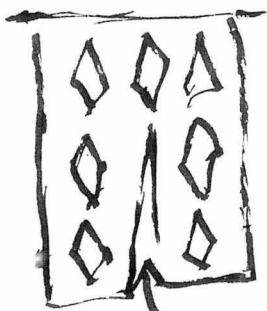
open door
to existing
Room - Enter
constructed
Room.

Brush past
first piece
of work

↓
How does that
fall back into
place.

WORK CUT UP THE
center, split, falls back into
place.

faceful

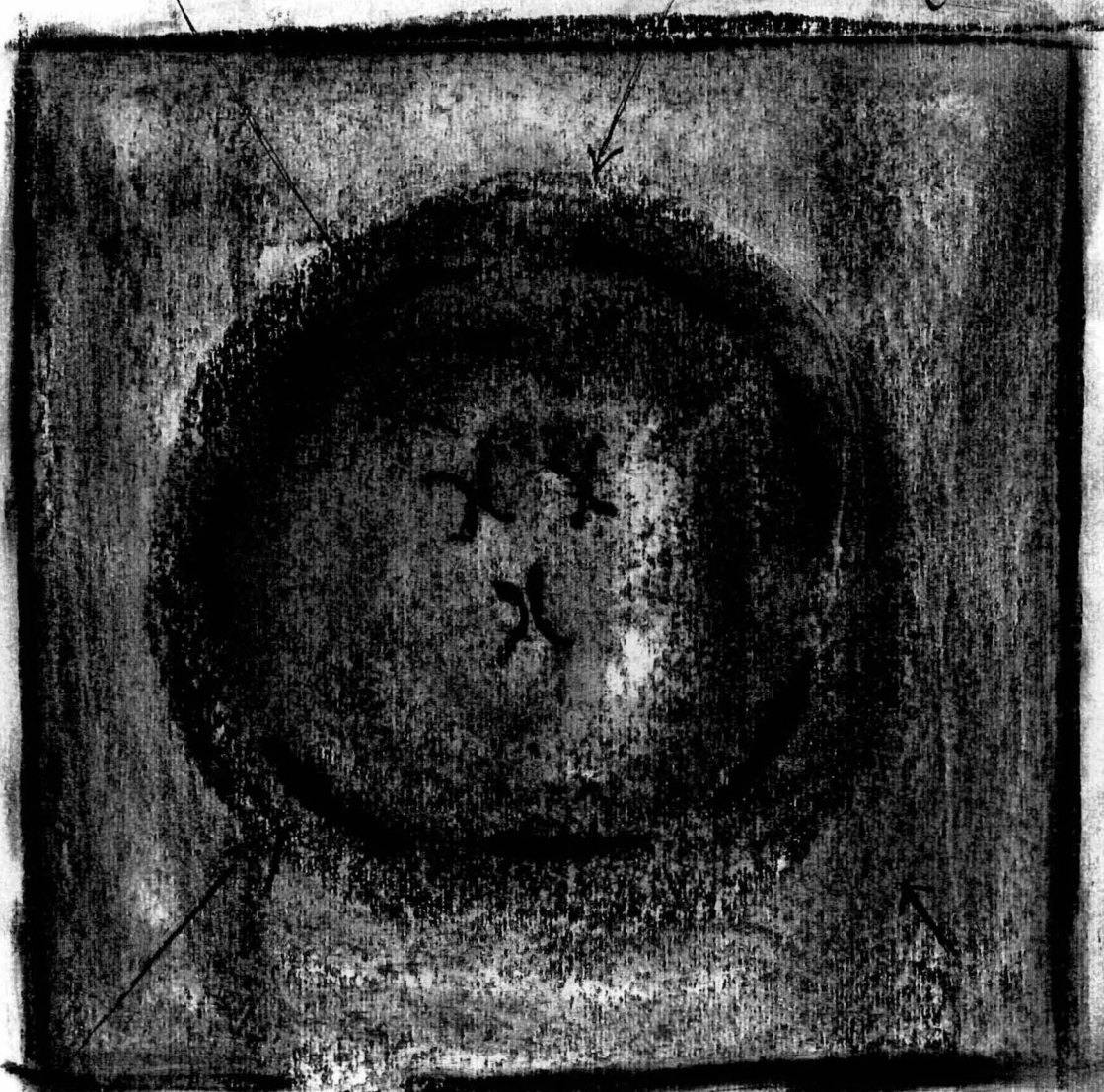


3d post forms

Constructed Room

Feminine Circle

How will I make this circular formation



The work will be hung in a circular shape.

How will hang work straight poles work against circular formation.

Original Room masculine source.

hang away from constructed space

Entry through original door
How to enter constructed space?

How is this area going to work?
Will the viewer receive message of masculine opposing feminine.

* Why is Room
always
central -
what are the
ramification
of this

?

se problems
How will it
stand - purpose
side - where
in environment

Shape of this Room
Architecture buildings -
construct towns
opposing environment
a masculine
process.

Original Room
This Room needs to
be outside gallery.
* Shop - Empty - what
will that set up
in viewer head.
* A Room which is an occupied
space - play with idea
of something existing
for another purpose.
low PRODOCK

* how do you enter
the constructed/built
space/Room.

* playing with idea
of domestic and
public spaces.

This area
almost sets
up a tunnel -
which could be
seen as entry
womb - that's
a problem set
up reading of
difference in sexuality?

* Softer design than others.
more feminine

Room doesn't create womb-tunnel etc.

it from behind
sing that
space /
conceptual

light work from behind.
Original / existing Room.

Enter Space through original door

* Off set the door to constructed room - starting play with existing room against the construct a subtle relationship - more appealing.

Set look allowing the viewer to consume both space

* By reflecting the shape / symbol used in the work in the hanging - solves problems with circular shape suggests and reinforces the symbol



* domestic spaces
* public spaces

Setting up idea of claimed temporal Space.

PART TWO: An overview of the ideas relating to identity, Australia and womanhood that I was reading and writing about during this time, and which, no matter how obscurely, inform the content and formal concerns of my thesis

Part two of the exegesis is an overview of contemporary theories of identity as they relate to Australian women. These ideas have been instrumental in the development of my thesis. They have informed the individual works I have made, and the installation format in which I have exhibited them.

Settlement

Identity has been a central issue of concern for Australian society since British settlement. On January 26, 1788 the first British fleet arrived to secure Australia as a penal out station. Britain's worst offenders were sentenced to death by hanging or banished to Australian soil '...for seven, for fourteen years, for life...the rest of there lives.'⁶ The British exported men, women and children to the new found penal settlement and in the process displaced local Aboriginal cultures. Aboriginal Australia continues to struggle for acceptance of both clan and individual identities today. Also displaced in this new history and identity of the place were women.

Contemporary White Australian society relies heavily on the documented individual masculine accounts and the works of the early male writers and artists to understand the first one hundred years of Australian settlement. Popular Australian written and oral histories often describe the hardship that convict men and the free settlers had to endure.

However, even as Australians now face the new millennium so little has been written about colonial Australian women, in particular, convict women. Evidently, for many white Australians their colonial grandmothers have become ‘...elusive creatures who must be delved for...’⁷ and are often only represented as a statistic.

Theories by men such as Dr Henry Maudsley who believed that ‘Women who taxed their brains too much might become sterile’,⁸ combined with ingrained patriarchal colonial structures prevented the documentation of women’s history by women. Furthermore, the fragmented accounts of women in the years following settlement leaves the individual with little or no choice other than to assume a generalised and often imagined image of their colonial grandmother’s position and role in early Australian society.

The physical and mental hardships endured by colonial women were reinforced in every aspect of the colony’s existence and arguably, were far greater than those faced by their male counterparts. Habitual contradictions in social reform strengthened the colonial patriarchal domain.

The notion ‘...that all women could be categorised as being exclusively either good or evil — with the virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene being the prototypes of each kind...’.⁹ It appears that very few if any of the women sent to Australia in the early years of settlement would be described or even treated as the stereotypical ‘Virgin Mary’.

‘The British who came to Australia...were nearly all nominally Christians.’¹⁰ And the British Government assumed that the most obvious solution in the prevention of acts against the church and socially unacceptable behaviour such as ‘bestiality’ and ‘homosexuality’ would be the provision of female convicts for sexual pleasure. However, it is evident that there was a shortage of women in the colony during the early years of settlement. To overcome this problem the British government simply imposed stricter sentences on female offenders than on males who committed similar crimes. Which we may perceive as doing nothing for the convict women’s spirit or belief that they were anything more than ‘...a kind of sexual servicing outcast group.’¹¹

Economic opportunities in the colonies supported the masculine population. Convict men were used as a form of cheap labour ‘...in administration and private enterprise (whaling and sealing, farming and sheep breeding)’.¹² Once they had completed their sentence the male convicts were presented with numerous opportunities to either earn their fare back home or support themselves as free men. Reinforcing this notion is the fact that for the first one hundred years of settlement Australia was described as ‘a working man’s paradise’.

Convict women on the other hand had little or no opportunity to find employment. Many emancipated convict women turned to prostitution or co-habitation with male convicts in an effort to survive life in the new colony. ‘The social and economic conditions of the first fifty years of white colonisation of Australia fostered whores rather than wives’.¹³

With the arrival of a growing number of free settlers to the penal settlement another stereotypical image of woman began to take shape. It was understood by both colonial men and women alike, that the free settling women would be recognised and treated as 'Angels of the Hearth' and it was their role to '...be devoted to a filled with admiration for men.'¹⁴ 'It was made abundantly clear to middle-class women that their only excuse for working outside the home was stark poverty'¹⁵ and if a woman chose to do so, she would be held with no more esteem than those 'damned whores', convict women.

This stereotypical image of woman and her 'proper' role, created by colonial men, is the first indication that a hierarchy and domination existed between women in colonial society. Woman's place was not in the public sphere, in the space of writing; and if she was there, she was a 'damned whore'.

The Power of the Australian Image Maker

For the convicts, the British Corps and free settlers alike, landing on Australian soil the '...intense quiet was unnatural; trees were unrecognisable. The heat was alarming; the weather, like everything else in that unknown place, was out of kilter, summer heat in late January instead of winter snow or sleet. Nothing was familiar to the senses, not the shape of a hill or the smell of wet grass or soot from chimneys. There were no chimneys, for there was not a building to be pointed to or named, nothing man-made; nothing.'¹⁶

The untamed nature of Australia compared to that of the mother country, arguably would have presented many of the newcomers with an overwhelming sense of loss and displacement. There is little or no indication that the settlers appreciated the unique qualities of the Australian landscape. Arguably, the British settlers superimposed their intellectual and aesthetic attitudes on the Australian continent.

Earlier in the paper it was recognised that Australia was settled as a penal settlement. However, there was another purpose for the British settlement, and it had a significant impact on the development of identity in this country. Settlement of Australia would ultimately provide the British Empire and its white citizens with another significant landmass and the opportunity to further economic growth. 'Unlike their forefathers the Englishmen of the 1788...thought the essential mark of a citizen was ownership of property. Property was what belonged to a specific individual, and distinguished that individual from others.'¹⁷

In the early years of settlement the Australian continent was declared *Terra Nullis*. This declaration did not recognise the traditional landowners, the Australian Aborigines. It provided the opportunity for emancipated convicts and free settlers to own and farm land. Unlike the traditional Aboriginal people, the settlers had little or no knowledge or understanding of the Australian landscape, it proved to be a harsh environment, whereas the land holder, their wives and children found themselves in isolated and remote areas.

For male artists and writers the rural interior of Australia and the settlers who inhabited it provided the inspiration that led to the creation of the 'Australian legend' and identity. Writers and artists emphasised the differences between the city life and bush life, 'they also projected onto their image of the bush their alienation from their urban environment: they sought an escape from what the city represented.'¹⁸

Middle class women were allowed domestic accomplishments like painting and music, but were not permitted by polite society to become professional singers, writers or artists. 'There were women of this generation, notably Mary Gilmore and Barbara Baynton, who commented effectively as writers, but necessarily on men's own ground.'¹⁹

For women it appears not even the isolated and remote interiors of the Australian landscape offered escape from patriarchal social reform. 'The notion of separate spheres is deeply etched into bush stories and images. The domestic sphere is represented as feminine space, and the outside the bush and the world at large as masculine space.'²⁰

Feminists as Image Makers

The first indication that Australian women were not entirely satisfied with their position in Australian society surfaced just prior to the First World War. These women are more commonly known as the first wave feminists, their attack on the patriarchal Australian society gave way to the greater threat by the Germans on the British empire.

Prior to the late 1960s ‘...Women were rarely if ever present as actual inventors of Australia, and as a result images of the nation were incapable of incorporating the female experience. Women were excluded from cultural production, hence invented Australians were inevitably masculine’.²¹ For the past thirty odd years Australian women have successfully waged a war against Australian patriarchal social reforms. Their aim has not merely been to deconstruct the patriarchal portrayal of women in Australian history, but to actively create a new image of Australian woman and her own history. To ‘...reject notions of inferiority and exclusion, demonstrating instead how male power operates in patriarchal society to the detriment of women.’²²

It was argued earlier in this paper that the ‘intelligentsia’ played a significant role in creating definitions of identities through constructed images. Predominantly the Australian female identity was presented in literature and the arts as ‘...figurative images, bolstered up by traditions in Western European painting, (which played)...an important role in making women second-class viewers: in encouraging us to act as sites rather than authors of images and in selling us definitions of femininity.’²³

To actively participate as authors of their own image and identity in society Australian women had to deconstruct the masculine colonial ideology which commanded that women be relegated to the private sphere and men to a public sphere. It is apparent that the arts, in particular, advocated and fostered roles and image of masculine cultural elitism.

For the feminists to be recognised as authors of their own images, identities and histories in Australian society, they need to deconstruct the popular masculine definition and discourse of public and private spheres and furthermore, gain recognition as valuable contributors to the arts. The first site of this deconstruction was their own bodies, this is because the female body had long been a site of male power and gaze, a favourite theme for dominant male philosophers whose theories have either supported or provided the foundation for the common and popular belief of masculine superiority. Over the past three decades feminist critique has emphasised the difference in the masculine and feminine body in an effort to obtain a level of equality between the sexes in Australia. Since their rise in the later part of the 1960s, both the fine arts and literature arenas have seen the creation of significant signs and symbols which represent the female experience, her identity and her history. Feminists have emphasised that the female body is the source and the origin of the female experience. Hence the fine arts arena has been inundated with visual images of the domestic sphere, female reproductive organs and genitalia.

The question which became paramount at this point in my research was: have Australian women reached the point at which the use of these specific signs and symbols are in grave danger of creating stereotypical readings of identity which reinforces rather than contests patriarchy. No matter how subversive and liberating the public display of their genitalia may have been, to what extent have they created only more objects for the male gaze?

When we examine contemporary female ideologies and the symbols and signs used to express them, I believe that it is no longer necessary to explore whether they are true or false, but what their function is, whose creations they are, whose interests they serve, and more importantly, what they actually deny. To what extent does the deconstruction of the female identity and history represent and reflect only the hopes, needs and fears of its feminist inventors and its white middle class feminist inventors?

I believe that Australian women's identity can no longer afford the luxury of being defined by its contemporary history. This is not to say that Australian women should deny their past or their bodies, but focus their deconstruction on the past three decades in an attempt to define new signs and symbols which represent a new generation of Australian women and their identities and the issues facing them today.

Feminine Sphere

The central aim of the feminist movement was to deconstruct the entrenched masculine perception of female identities and histories by '...breaking old patterns, challenging established norms, and attempting to validate new modes of organisation and structures'²⁴ that were not phallogentric.

Thirty years after the rise and prominence of the feminist movement its prevailing presence and power can still be felt. However, the feminist movement's '...great animating insight lies in the recognition of the systematic nature of men's power over women; its concomitant blind spot is the frequent failure to see that sisterhood of women also involves systematic relations of domination between women.'²⁵ Has one phallus now been replaced by another?

As a female textile artist dealing with my own history and identity as a woman I am presented with a double bind. In attempting to shift the reading of my work as feminist, I have dealt with the issue of the Australian identity and the relationship to the unique Australian environment/landscape. This is unfamiliar territory which arguably, the feminist movement has not placed a great deal of emphasis on, yet I feel it is an area where contemporary Multicultural, Aboriginal and Anglo-Celtic Australian women may be able to create a new space and place for contemporary female Australian identity and history to take shape.

The Relationship between Woman and the Australian Landscape

To represent one's Australianness in today's political climate is a problematic task and not just because Australians are at a crucial point in the debate about national identity. The biggest problem is that this notion of identity itself is a construct that is rarely stable.²⁶

Arguably, the suggestion by numerous writers, that Australia's national identity is an invention, a cultural construct, is a valid point that gains substance when we examine Australia's shifting power relations and changing social reforms. 'There has been a strong radical-nationalist writing in the disciplines of literature and history, and it has shown a capacity to create powerful myths and memorable narratives...It has been said that radical nationalism, with its emphasis on bush tradition and the digger, leaves women, Aborigines and urban dwellers out of the picture.'²⁷

My concern is not to develop an Australian identity, but to reclaim issues of identity by deconstructing the colonisers' politics of identity and the legacy of its masculine heritage, to provoke an arena which amplifies and hopefully writes into its public domain, those unwritten stories that are whispered in the night, stories by women and marginalised others.

This notion reinforces the idea that 'Our sense of what it means to be Australian emanates not from actual historical events but from their representation in literature, history, art, film, and the like'.²⁸ Australia's most celebrated writers, artists and historians are men. 'A recurring theme in their work is landscape — and a landscape which functions as a metaphor for Woman — as in the father sky to mother earth, colonial master to plains of promise, native son to barren bush, contemporary Australians to red/dead centre. All these equations reproduce the 'perfect' couple — masculine activity and feminine passivity.'²⁹

Since the rise of the feminist movement in this country Australians have witnessed a shift in the power relation between men and women. A growing trend by women has been to deconstruct the patriarchal themes of Australia's most eminent classics. A typical example is Barbara Jefferies, Sue Rowley's and Kay Shaffer's reinterpretation and deconstruction of Henry Lawson's *The Drover's Wife*.

There is little evidence in either historical or contemporary Australian society that indicates that women have examined their own relationship to the landscape. Arguably, the most renowned female writer to present Australian society with a feminine perspective through a feminised character is Barbara Baynton. In *Squeaker's Mate*, Baynton's character upsets the 'perfect couple' syndrome that is predominant in work written by men around the same era, by inverting it. It is the woman who fells the trees while the man boils the billy. However, there is still a strong sense of imperialism at work. Arguably, Squeaker's mate (ie. the woman) cannot be read as colonised, because positioned in a bush landscape she assumes the popular male personification, of coloniser.

One of my aims has been to redefine my own relationship to nature, spatiality and the Australian landscape within a feminist construct. 'Art itself must have begun with nature — not as imitation of nature, nor as formalised representation of it, but simply as the perception of relationships between humans and the natural world.

Visual art, even today, even at its most ephemeral or neutralised, is rooted in matter. Transformation of and communication through matter — the primitive connection with substance of life, or *prima materia* — is the rightful domain of all artists. Add to this the traditional, and ambivalent, connection between woman and nature, and there is a double bond for women artists.³⁰

Patriarchal colonial societies believed that ‘...the essential mark of a citizen was the ownership of property’.³¹ Throughout white Australians’ literature, art and history there is a prevailing sense of the ‘essential’ masculine Australian character, conquering the landscape, and in turn immortalising the notions of ‘self reliance’ and ‘mateship’ which are absent from nature, land and matriarchal cultures.

The connection between women and nature can be both felt and sensed when one views the work and listens to Judy Watson describe her traditional homeland ‘...When you walk in that country...the earth is beating, pulsating, heat, blood, heart...things are hidden...like bones of the people have been here before...you are walking in their footprints.’³² This Aboriginal aesthetic is more relevant to contemporary art practice than the heritage bequeathed to us by colonisation.

Textiles

‘The poet, when his heart is weighted, writes a sonnet, and the painter paints a picture, ...but the woman who is only a woman, what has she but her needle.’³³

Many of the imprisoned convict women were taught to sew by the free Christian women. Arguably, their intentions were to reinforce the patriarchal moral standing and position which women of the time were forced to adhere to. Furthermore, ‘...by employing themselves in needle-work and knitting, the prisoners could earn a little money for themselves, both for their present needs and also to save some money for the day when they would be released from prison’.³⁴

Convict women transported to Australia were provided with numerous items before exportation, interestingly, among them were ‘...One small ditto, containing: One piece of tape. One oz. of pins. One hundred needles. Four balls of white sewing cotton. One ditto black. One ditto blue. One ditto red...One thimble. One pair of scissors...’.³⁵ It was convict women who created many of the first Australian textiles, but due to the fact that such a stigma was attached to being a convict ‘...or the sixteenth removed from ... an indelible stain which no power on earth can wash away’³⁶, very few remain. Furthermore, traditional textiles by nature of the materials used unless preserved carefully will perish. Sadly, today we find that we are often only left with fragments of our stitched colonial Australian history.

Our Grandmothers, mothers inaugurated new techniques and materials into colonial Australian society, yet the making of textiles is not new to Australia. Although the concept of making textiles as a fine art form is. Long before Australian settlement the Aborigines were making textiles. Employing a patchwork technique, the pelts of the animals were sewn together using kangaroo sinews. This traditional form of protection against the elements was abandoned when Aborigines were provided with blankets. Furthermore, Aboriginal baskets, which were once used in domestic life, have found new meaning in the arts of contemporary Australian society.

The documentation of both textiles and women's history in Australia parallel each other. Traditionally a signifier of sexual difference the making of textiles in Australia echoed '...the patriarchally-approved feminine virtues of diligence, obedience, modesty, chastity and nurturance were inculcated through its practice...increasingly viewed in terms of what it displayed of the needle worker femininity.'³⁷ When the feminist historians began proclaiming the need for a new kind of Australian history, one that fully included women, they were often discouraged by the dominant patriarchal society. 'The masculine and public world is defined only in contrast or in opposition to the private world of women. The private (female) sphere is that realm of social life against which public (male) sphere can be made known and understood by social theory'.³⁸

Reinterrogated, was the argument that women were not active in public life, confined to the private domain, which was proclaimed to rarely leave detailed records of women's existence. Ironically, the making of textiles, the very activity a patriarchal society encouraged, has provided valuable clues and images by which Australian women's identity and history can be documented.

For several decades now, textiles has provided Australian women with a medium to voice their own stories of identity. It was the Second Wave Feminists who shifted patriarchal structures and empowered textiles.

As stated earlier in this paper, two prominent themes featured in the images and symbols used by feminist artists. First, the female body, in particular reproductive organs and genitalia. Second, the domestic arena. Clearly linked to the use of both images is the concept of repetition, a metaphor for women's work and the female experience. Furthermore, to achieve this shift textiles had to be disassociated with its craft based origins and the domestic world of women. During this period traditional textile processes and techniques were often abandoned.

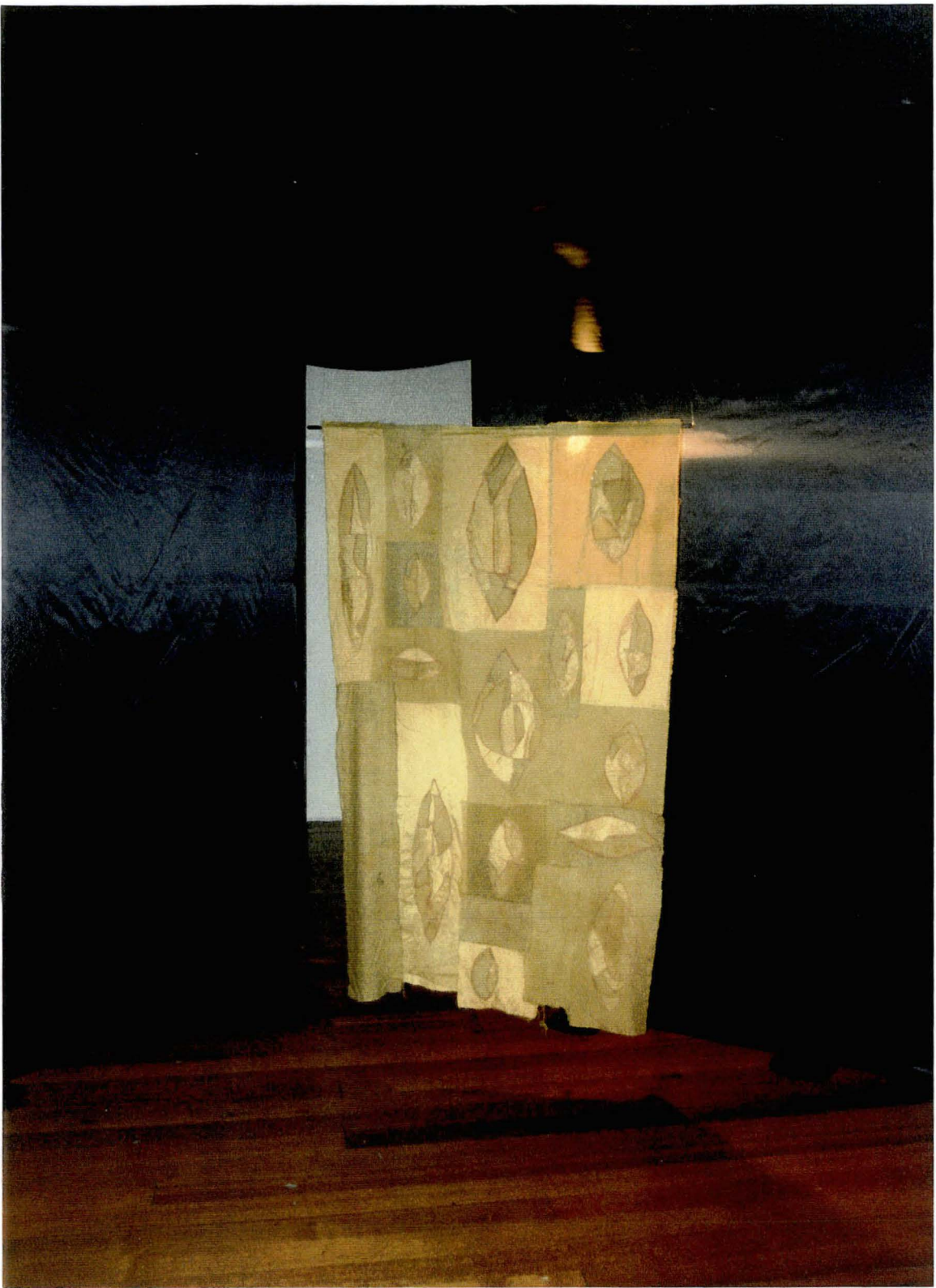
I have often wondered, have many of the traditions and qualities that make textiles unique been lost in the last thirty years of feminism?. Is it time for textile artists to reconsider their origins?, do contemporary textile modes of making have the power to voice current notions concerning Australian women's identities and experiences? And is there a need for textile artists to deconstruct and challenge traditional modes of viewing?

With textiles move into the fine arts arena came a higher profile for both the medium and its practitioners. It is the viewer's daily interaction with textiles in the home and the work place that creates a relationship of intimacy. Moreover, textiles link with the domestic world provides the viewer with a familiarity that the majority of other fine art forms do not share. Arguably, the traditional intimacy of textiles has been restricted by the simple act of hanging works on gallery walls. The viewer is forced in a gallery situation to view textiles as you would view a painting or sculpture, from behind a line and at a distance.

For the most part textile history has belonged to marginalised social groups. It is in traditional textiles that we can sense the human experience and 'Embedded in each work, is the imprint of the maker's hand, carrying the thought and knowledge of the maker's life experience, and made visible for those looking at it'.³⁹ Textiles have been the primary bind between a culture's symbolic values and material cultures. 'Extraordinary stories are often told, challenging the notions of passive patience and dedication that first impressions of painstaking crafted textiles works. Perhaps these stories would remain unbelievable if we were not also convinced by the pragmatic workmanship that accompanies the imagery, as if the dictated work underscores the passion with which the story is told.'⁴⁰



MFA Installation
1998
Detail



MFA Installation
1998
Detail



MFA Installation
1998
Detail

Footnotes

- ¹ Sanders, J. 1992, 'Landscape, light and movement', *Craft Arts International*, no. 24, pp. 47–48.
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- ³ Rowley, S. 1993, *Discerning Textiles*, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, p. 25.
- ⁴ Ioannou, Noris 1992, *Craft in Society: An Anthology of Perspective's*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Western Australia, p.
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- ⁶ Donkin, N. 1988, *The Women Were There: Nineteen Women Who Enlivened Australian History*, Collins Dove, Melbourne, Australia, p. 2.
- ⁷ Donkin, N. 1988, *The Women Were There: Nineteen Women Who Enlivened Australian History*, Collins Dove, Melbourne, Australia, p. 3.
- ⁸ De Vries, S. 1995, *Strength of Spirit: Pioneering Women of Achievement from First Fleet to Federation*, Millennium Books Australia Pty Ltd, p. 13.
- ⁹ Summers, A. 1985, *Dammed Whores and God's Police, The Colonisation of Women in Australia*, 1985 reprint, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Victoria, Australia, p. 267.
- ¹⁰ Bolton, G. 1992, *Spoils and Spoilers; A History of Australians Shaping their Environment*, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, Sydney, Australia, p. 147.
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- ¹⁸ Whitlock, G. & Carter, D. 1996 reprint, *Images of Australia*, University of Queensland Press, Queensland, p. 36.
- ¹⁹ Whitlock, G. & Carter, D. 1996 reprint, *Images of Australia*, University of Queensland Press, Queensland, p. 36.
- ²⁰ Rowley, S. 1989, 'Inside the deserted hut: The representation of motherhood in bush mythology', *Westerley*, vol. 34, no. 4, December, p. 79.
- ²¹ Whitlock, G. & Carter, D. 1996 reprint, *Images of Australia*, University of Queensland Press, Queensland, p. 147.
- ²² Kirby, S. 1992, *Sight Lines: Women's Art and Feminist Perspective in Australia*, Craftsman House, NSW, Australia, p. 9.
- ²³ Bonner, F. 1992, *Imaging Women, Culture Representations and Gender*, Cambridge, UK Polity Press in Association with Open University, p. 129.
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